(d) There is no system of priest for any group.

(e) The Government deputes a serving Government officer as Liaison Officer with each batch of the Yatri.

Visit of Japanese tourists to Buddhist circuits

1727. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state the action taken to attract more Japanese tourists to the Buddhist circuits in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): The Department of Tourism has printed the Budhhist circuits and Sunny South brochures in Japanese language. A PR film on Buddhist circuits and South India has also been produced, which had widely covered Andhra Pradesh. In addition Travel Agents education seminars on Buddhist sites have been organized regularly at several places in Japan.

NRI Investments in Tourism Sector

1728. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any new package to attract Non-Resident Indians to invest in the renovation and development of tourism destinations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would consider formulating such a package; and

(d) whether Government have formulated any innovative measures to promote tourism in the country to bring up to the level of international standards?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has identified Tourism as a "High Priority" industry for foreign and private investment. Consequently a Foreign Investment Promotion Board and Project Approval Board has been set up by the Government to clear proposals for foreign investment expeditiously. Further, foreign investment and investment by NRIs upto 100% are being cleared under the automatic approval scheme by the RBI itself. The Ministry of Tourism has formulated plans to attract NRIs and Persons of Indian

Origin to visit India through its overseas offices, airlines and Indian Missions abroad and has further proposed to undertake promotional activities in major NRI & PIO markets in association with the Indian travel trade to promote investment opportunities in India.

(d) The measures adopted to promote India as an Internatioal Tourism Destination are through advertising in the print and electronic media, participation in travel exhibitions & fairs overseas, providing information through brochures & other tools. A special effort is being made to harness Information Technology for dissemination of tourism information on India. The Ministry also propose to launch a tourism Portal for the benefit of all tourists including NRI the and PIO's.

Bi-centenary celebration of coronation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

1729. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the coronation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in April, 2001 on national level; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) The Government have decided to support reputed organisations for celebrating the event.

Tourism Projects in Arunachal Pradesh

1730. SHRI NABAM REBIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of tourism projects sent by the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh for approval of the Central Government during 1999-2000, 2000-2001;

(b) the details of each of the projects approved alongwith the financial assistance provided to the State;

(c) the reasons for non-approval of the projects; and

(d) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) For the year 1999-2000, 19 projects were sent by the State Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh. Out of them 11 projects were sanctioned for Central